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INFO RUEHZS/ASSOCIATION OF SOUTHEAST ASIAN NATIONS  
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 3905  
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 6887  
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 2860  
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC  
RHEFDIA/DIA WASHDC  
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI  
RHHMUNA/CDR USPACOM HONOLULU HI  
RHFJSCC/COMMARFORPAC  
RUCPDOG/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHINGTON DC  
RUEATRS/DEPT OF TREASURY WASHINGTON DC  
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E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/15/2016  
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [PHUM](#) [KDEM](#) [TH](#)  
SUBJECT: IF THAI POLITICIANS WERE EXPIRED FOODS...

REF: BANGKOK617

Classified By: Political Counselor Susan M. Sutton, reason 1.4 (b) and (d).

11. (C) SUMMARY. In a candid meeting, civil activist Rosana Tositurakul likened Thai politicians to "products with a short shelf life" when exposed to the culture of corruption. She urged the international community to focus on counter-corruption and transparency measures in Thailand instead of pressing for a quick election that would only "force the Thai people to choose from a basket of expired products." Rosana believed that the draft constitution would not pass the referendum if articles calling for a non-elected prime minister were included, and did not expect the "undercurrents" -- i.e. supporters of -- former PM Thaksin to cause major problems if the contents of the new charter are "accepted by the people." End summary.

IT'S ANTI-CORRUPTION, STUPID!  
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12. (C) Rosana Tositurakul, one of Citigroup's "Politics Shapers -- Ten Thais to Watch" this year and one of the Embassy's proposed "Five Most Influential Women of Thailand," (reftel) compared Thai politicians to manufactured goods that "spoil easily" under the political environment. But unlike factories, Rosana claimed that the Thai people have "no way to manage quality control" for these "expired" politicians and Thailand lacks the mechanisms to "return" these politicians if they are corrupt.

13. (C) Rosana urged the international community to stop pressing Thailand to hold elections as soon as possible and instead concentrate on ensuring a better quality of governance by introducing anti-corruption and government transparency measures in the new constitution that would serve to enforce "quality control" on politicians. Rosana explained that holding a quick election without dealing with Thailand's corruption problem would be like "forcing the Thai people to choose from a basket of spoiled foods that would make them sick if ingested."

CONTENT MATTERS

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¶5. (C) Rosana stated that the approval of the new constitution hinges upon its content, with the most important issue being whether the prime minister will be elected or appointed. Rosana believed that the new charter would not pass the referendum if it stipulated for an appointed prime minister.

¶6. (C) Rosana also believed that former PM Thaksin's Thai-Rak-Thai (TRT) Party will conduct anti-constitution "undercurrent activities" against the new charter "regardless of its contents" in Thailand's north and northeast, but "did not expect the 'undertow' to be strong enough" to be disruptive to the referendum as long as the new constitution's contents are "accepted by the people."  
BOYCE